

Wycombe Wanderers 1, Alvechurch 0

WYCOMBE Wanderers' new centre-back this season, Gerry Olson, scored his first goal for the club on Wednesday night. And it was enough to ease Wycombe to victory over Midland champions Alvechurch.

The match was staged as a forerunner to Barry East's new four year plan for amateur soccer. Although an attractive fixture, only 801 turned out at Loakes Park. The ones who stayed away missed some entertaining football, firstly from Wycombe and later in the game from the visitors.

The same old problem dogged Wycombe from the start. Chances were created but, yet again, they went untaken. Fortunately, for the Blues,

Alvechurch appeared to be suffering from the same problem.

JOHN RETURNS

John Maskell returned between the posts in place of the unavailable O'Brien, while Tony Horseman replaced Tony Amos, who later came on as substitute. John Delaney also gave his ankle a run out for the final eight minutes.

Graham Allner, scorer of 34 goals last season, and who has already two hat-tricks this season, revealed a real threat to Wycombe from the kick off, running wide of the defence and sending in a powerful shot narrowly wide.

It took Wycombe 14 minutes to present the first serious attack, Larry Pritchard forcing a fine stop from Chris Ward. From the corner Searle's looping header was cleared off the line by Ralph Punsheon.

After the initial breakthrough, Wanderers put Alvechurch under further pressure. Horseman, now approaching something like his form of last term shot over the bar after a timely run through defence, while Pritchard again had a drive well saved by Ward.

In between Wycombe's raids the diminutive Allner was causing the home defence quite a headache with his speed and clever use of the touch line.

BREAKTHROUGH

It took just five minutes of the second half for Wycombe to break through with a crashing goal by Olson. Ward managed to punch Horseman's corner out of the area.

But it was met first time by Olson's right boot, his vicious volley thundering in off the under side of the bar. Referee Salmon ruled that the ball had crossed the line.

Tony Amos replaced the industrious Hutchinson after 60 minutes and put in a couple of his long range specialities. But, as 15 stone centre-back John Inchmore, a former Worcestershire 2nd XI cricketer, grew increasingly dominant at the heart of the defence, so the visitors pressed for an equaliser.

Derek Gamblin, looking in a class of his own at full-back, blocked Kevin Palmer's goal-bound shot after 75 minutes and then Kevin Denham forced Maskell to fire at his feet.

The keeper received a nasty knock on his arm during the incident and could be doubtful for tomorrow (Saturday). Delaney came on for the last eight minutes for Holifield and appeared to be fit for the Ilford visit.

SIMPLEST

Alvechurch's final and simplest chance came in the very last minute, when Allner spurned as easy an opportunity

as he is likely to get all season. Maskell fumbled Denham's pot-shot and the winger blazed the ball over the top, from eight yards.

This idea of a champions of champions competition could well catch on. But the proposal to play them on professional grounds could be a mistake.

With only 800 Wycombe loyalists turning out on Wednesday (and a coach load of Alvechurch supporters) Villa Park or Molineux would be mighty lonely places!

S.E.

WYCOMBE: Maskell; Birdseye, Gamblin, Olson, Williams, Galt, Horseman, Pritchard, Searle, Holifield (sub. Delaney 82 mins.), Hutchinson (sub. Amos 60 mins.).

ALVECHURCH: Ward; Lyne, Francis, Inchmore, Punsheon, Palmer, Davis, Denham, Lawrence, Horne, Allner. Sub. Elder (not used).

Referee: K. G. Salmon (Barnet).

Half-time: 0-0. Goalscorer: Olson (50).

Attendance (all paid): 801.